



ASLEF

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can resist LUL attacks

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convert from the far right

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New rail jobs – writing pointless reports!

GEORGE OSBORNE has sharpened the Tory axe on public services, and public spending, in Britain. The trouble is that the Chancellor's medicine isn't working. It's killing, rather than curing, the patient. The influential economist John Maynard Keynes explained how a government should spend, rather than cut, its way out of recession.

That was a lesson understood by Franklin D Roosevelt when, in the United States, he introduced the New Deal – and big public infrastructure projects such as the Tennessee Valley Authority – to drag America out of the Great Depression. FDR knew the value of "pump priming" – federal spending – to get the economy moving again.

Because a worker on a public project with a pound in his pocket will spend it in a shop which will order more goods – which gets the manufacturing and retailing cycle revolving again. It's good economics, as well as good politics, but the Chancellor is stuck with his single-minded, and simple-minded, policy of cuts and a flatlining economy that refuses to grow.

HS2 is a start but it will run only from London to Birmingham. I regret the government's lack of vision, and lack of imagination, because the longer the journey, the greater the benefits a high speed train brings. A high speed line from the south of England all the way up to Glasgow and Edinburgh and the central belt of Scotland would make domestic air travel, with all its detrimental environmental effects, a less attractive option.

Major public projects such as HS2, Crossrail, and electrification are good not just for the railways but for Britain, too, because they will help get the economy moving again. It's not so much spending as an investment – in our future. Not just for the railways, in which we have a special interest, but for the greater good. The Conservative-led coalition, with its savage cuts in public spending, is putting that future at risk.

Mick Whelan,
General Secretary



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**More than
just a union**

Rail travellers pay twice!

Taxpayers last year made contributions of £4 billion to privately owned Train Operating Companies (TOCs).

'You would think this was a significant amount to contribute to the companies' begging bowls,' says Mick Whelan, ASLEF's general secretary. 'But it's only the start. If these people actually want to go on a train, they are obliged to make more 'charitable

contributions' to the franchises – amounts that increase all the time.' Mick was speaking as the

Office of Rail Regulation released figures showing the increases in the amount of rail costs paid by passengers, rather than central government. ORR said:

- fares accounted for 55.8% of TOCs in 2010/11. Now they amount to 57.6%.
- last year passengers paid out £7.2 billion of fares. This was a rise of 8.7%.

'The economics of the railways are a mystery to behold,' Mick says. 'Rail is growing. It is more popular than it has ever been. So

shouldn't passengers expect to benefit from using a service that is increasingly used? Isn't that how it works?

'And the ORR also records that rail costs fell by 2.1% last year. Surely this should be reflected in lower passenger charges?

'Private companies don't hesitate for a moment to raise prices if their costs go up. But it also seems that they also raise their prices if costs go down.

'Is it any surprise that ASLEF wants a complete review of rail financing?'

Mick points out that politicians jostle with each other to talk about 'eliminating transport

poverty', the opportunity of ordinary people to access affordable travel. 'Charging them more, twice, for the same service is a very bizarre way of seeking to achieve this!' he says.

Meanwhile, as he points out, the private investors in TOCs make money hand-over-fist for no risk whatever.

'These ORR figures show that we need to revisit financing. Our view is that the case for change is self-evident. But if free-market bigots need more evidence, part of the exercise must be to keep the East Coast Main Line in public hands so there is a not-for-profit comparator.'

Safety prosecutions in perspective

It is often said that the British care more about their dogs than their fellow humans. Well, the law seems to ...

Last year the RSPCA secured 4,168 convictions against 1,552 people, with a conviction rate of 98%. This is a great achievement from a body that employs less than 1,700 people, and good luck to them.

But what about the figures for people who kill and injure workers? It's a rather different story according to Hugh Robertson, the TUC's Senior

Health and Safety Officer.

In the same time-scale he reports that 680 cases were prosecuted for health and safety breaches. These cases led to 630 convictions, with a conviction rate of 93%.

In terms of imprisonment for killing workers the figures are even starker. Following an RSPCA prosecution, 86 people were sent to prison last year for breaching animal protection laws. The HSE record is five people imprisoned for health and safety offences since January 1996.



Jack Housley, a member of the Retired Members' Section committee who hails from Doncaster, has donated two splendid oil paintings to the union. The one in this picture is a fine portrait of a mess-room scene of days gone by (when there was as much smoke in the mess-room as came out of the steam trains!). The other is a portrait from a photograph of Billy Ronksley, Arthur Scargill and Ray Buckton.

'I am delighted to accept this gift from Jack,' says general secretary Mick Whelan. 'These paintings are a valuable addition to the union's memorabilia. Pride in our history is an important part of ASLEF's culture.'

Union active at Perth conference

Mick Whelan moved the union's motion on the Action for Rail campaign, urging STUC affiliates to fight cuts to Scottish rail services. In the wider transport debate he emphasized the inefficiencies of the franchising system.

Jim Baxter moved ASLEF's motion on Palestine, highlighting the many injustices in the region, and also moved the union's motion on cuts to further education in which Jim lamented the consequences for youth unemployment.

During the debate on austerity Chris Barrie called for a clampdown on tax evasion. He also endorsed an RMT motion opposing the re-privatisation of the East Coast Main Line.

Kevin Lindsay supported an NUM motion calling for an inquiry into police and state handling of the miners' strike and also spoke at a fringe meeting organised by Better Together in which he outlined ASLEF's opposition to next year's independence referendum.

Craig Cameron moved a motion on international equality issues and also



ASLEF's delegation to the 2013 Scottish Trade Union Congress in Perth consisted of General Secretary Mick Whelan, District 2 Organiser Kevin Lindsay, Chris Barrie (Edinburgh No 2) and Jim Baxter (Motherwell). ASLEF member Craig Cameron (Yoker) attended Congress in his capacity as the first Chair of the STUC LGBT Committee. On the left of the picture are the union's political advisor James McGowan and EC member Hugh Bradley

seconded a motion on the subject of corrective rape.

The delegation additionally held a number of informal meetings with MPs and trade unionists.

500 CLUB

Seven was the winning number of this month's 500 Club draw, reports Alan Taylor, Treasurer of the Retired Members Committee. The winner was G. Turner.

The union has produced new 18 mm diameter enamel crescent-stud button-hole badges. They are available for £5 (including post, packing and VAT) either by contacting admin@aslef.org.uk or by



going to ASLEF's on-line shop at www.aslef.org.uk

Mick Ward assault conviction quashed

TRAIN driver Mick Ward, 42, from Harrogate, was 'delighted' when York Crown Court last month quashed a conviction for common assault wrongly handed down last year. Mick has been suspended from work since July when charges were made against him.

More than 40 ASLEF members and other rail workers were in the court to show their support for Mick - and their disgust at the original Harrogate Magistrates Court decision from last December.

Mick always vehemently denied that he took a young passenger by the throat and pushed him against a wall at Knaresborough Railway Station last April. Last month, with the support of ASLEF and Thompsons Solicitors, he was cleared of all charges.

It has now emerged that a series of failings and miscommunication between the British Transport Police (BTP) and the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) led to Mick being wrongly convicted. They did not inform the Harrogate magistrates that the young passenger (who as a minor cannot be named for legal reasons) had already been issued with a Youth Reprimand order following unruly behaviour at Harrogate Train Station, en route to Knaresborough, on the day the alleged assault took place.

In court the young man denied he had behaved in a disruptive manner and the magistrates ignored Mick Ward when he said that, after being verbally abused by the passenger, he used reasonable force to move him away from the train for his own safety.

They also paid no heed of the testimony of three railway workers who said they had trouble with a group of teenagers behaving 'appallingly' around the train Mr Ward was driving.

After the conviction was overturned, Mick, who has worked for Northern for more than a decade, spoke about the strain the whole episode had put on himself and his family. 'I'm disgusted that the British Transport Police stood by and let my reputation be dragged through the mud. I'm grateful to the union, my colleagues and my solicitors. They've all stood shoulder to shoulder with me.'

Mick Whelan said he urged the BTP and the CPS to learn from their mistakes and 'take urgent measures to work closer in the future to ensure the rights and reputations of Britain's railway workers are not threatened in this way again.'

Marching on May Day

ASLEF members from around the country joined general secretary Mick Whelan on the traditional May Day march and rally in London. May Day has been celebrated by the labour movement in the capital since the nineteenth century and become an opportunity for campaigners for progressive causes to join together in a show of solidarity with workers around the world.

Members met at midday at Clerkenwell Green, an area with strong radical roots - Wat Tyler camped there during the

Peasants' Revolt of 1381 and George Loveless, the first of the Tolpuddle Martyrs to return to Britain after transportation to Australia, was welcomed back with a mass meeting on the green in 1838 - and moved off at 1pm, marching behind a brass band with activists from many other trade unions as well as workers from other countries, pensioners, students, and anti-globalisation campaigners through central London to a rally in Trafalgar Square.

There they heard Paul Nowak,



The ASLEF contingent meet at Clerkenwell Green before marching to Trafalgar Square

assistant general secretary of the TUC, praise the work of Britain's 'strong, vibrant and democratic' trade union movement and call

for the Conservative-led coalition to be replaced by 'a government that will deliver for working-class communities'.



Executive Committee member Hugh Bradley (second left) spoke about fatal accidents to rail workers at the Workers Memorial Day event at Summerlee Heritage Centre, Coatbridge, reports retired member GEORGE ADAMSON. Hugh is pictured here with members of Motherwell branch who were at the ceremony

WORLD'S OLDEST TUNNEL

Archaeologists in Derbyshire have found what they believe is the world's oldest railway tunnel. It lies on the route of the Butterley Gangroad, a horse-operated railway built by 1793 to link the Cromford Canal with limestone quarries at Crich. The line closed in 1933 and the tunnel was sealed up in the 1980s.

Previously the world's oldest train tunnel was thought to be on the Peak Forest Tramway which was built in 1795.



Butterley is two years older than Peak Forest tunnel



CHINESE PUZZLE: P. J. Smith sent this picture of Beijing station pointing out the remarkable strides being taken by the Chinese 'while we are whingeing about HS2'. He asks two questions: How do they do it? And how come we can't?



Representing ASLEF at the 2013 Scottish Labour Party conference in Inverness were (right to left) Alan Moir (Polmadie), Rab Wickstead (Edinburgh No 2), General Secretary Mick Whelan and District 2 Organiser Kevin Lindsay. ASLEF member Alison Miller attended conference as a delegate for Lanark and Hamilton East

Scottish Labour Party 2013

Alan Moir, speaking in the debate on Scottish independence, drew attention to the flaws in the SNP's economic arguments. Rab Wickstead moved the union's emergency motion calling for the Scottish Party to reaffirm support for retention of the East Coast mainline in the public sector, pointing out that the publicly-owned line had received the least amount of public subsidy of any train operator in the UK.

Scottish Labour announced the establishment of a

consultation into the future of the Scotrail franchise and Kevin Lindsay took to the stage alongside Shadow Finance Minister Ken McIntosh and Jim Lee from the Co-operative Party to discuss the issue. Kevin highlighted the need for the franchise to be run on a not-for-profit basis.

The delegation were an active presence on the fringe circuit and held a series of high level meetings with senior political and trade union figures.

French invasion of Farringdon!

Reg French, who retired from driving trains in 1956 because of his asthma, made a long-delayed visit to ASLEF's head office last month.

'I had an invitation from Mick Rix but nothing was ever arranged,' he says. 'That was in 1998! So I'm fifteen years late, which is bad even for a railway man!'

Along with Reg came his sons Peter, an East Coast driver based in Leeds, and Terry, who is membership secretary of the Selby and District Rail Users' Group – and

'mystery guest' Rodney Bickerstaffe! Reg explains how he knows Rodney: 'I was the Assistant Secretary and LDC member at Selby Loco before my health forced a move

out of the industry,' Reg says. 'I then became a full time officer for NUPE, the public health union that's now part of UNISON.'

Rodney was general secretary of NUPE and UNISON from 1982 – 2000.



Reg (centre) flanked by sons Peter and Terry on one side, and ASLEF general secretary Mick Whelan and former UNISON general secretary Rodney Bickerstaffe on the other

Top training for branch secretaries

A report from **Eddie Brown**

When I became secretary of the Orpington branch in January my first thought was – I need some help! Happily it was on hand – in the form of a union course for exactly people like me.

Last month Stoke Rochford Hall in a picturesque village near Grantham, became my home for three days, along with 19 other new branch officials from all over the country.

After welcomes from the highly professional Marz Colombini and knowledgeable Simon Weller we began an

arduous few days training. It was fortunate that I'd brought two pens with me!

We were joined for a day by our sociable and approachable general secretary Mick Whelan, who proved to be much more than 'that face in the Journal'. We also had Chris Proctor from the Journal and Nigel Gooch, the finance officer, who explained the mysteries of our end-of-year returns.

The course stressed that organisation and communication are the keys to a successful branch, and it is our role to encourage members' involvement and participation. We also learnt about district meetings which involve all branch secretaries within the



Eddie is now as confident in the branch as he is on the footplate

district, the basics of the union conference (AAD) and looked at the union's rule book.

I came away believing that I now have the tools, contacts and confidence to carry out my role in my branch. I hope Orpington's members will agree!



Top: 20 ASLEF branch secretaries with Marz Colombini, Mick Whelan and Simon Weller

Right: Mick Whelan outlines the union's ambitions and challenges at national level



ANDY MORRISON'S COUNCIL SEAT WON BY WIFE PAM

The late Andy Morrison, as well as being an ASLEF officer, was a councillor in, and twice Mayor of, Harwich before his tragic death last year.

At a by-election held last month, Andy's wife Pam stood for Labour in the Harwich West seat formerly held by Andy – and won handsomely.

Nigel Gibson, who took over Andy's District Organiser job, said, 'If he's up there keeping an eye on us, I'm sure Andy Morrison will be smiling today.'



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Finally facing my Waterloo

A passenger train has used an international platform at Waterloo station for the first time since the last Eurostar service left five-and-a-half years ago.

The sweeping platforms of the state-of-the-art terminal under the geometric glass roof were designed specifically to accommodate Eurostar trains and intercontinental passengers but were only used for 12 years before the service moved to St Pancras.

The platforms – performances of a critically-acclaimed production of *The Railway Children* notwithstanding – were mothballed at a cost of £1.5 million a year and have been deserted ever since.

The last Labour government spent nearly £3 million in 2008 connecting platform 20 in the international terminal with platform 19 on the domestic side, but no trains have used the new facilities until now.

A special service from Woking pulled into platform 20 on 29 April and rail bosses have promised to bring it back into regular use by this time next year.

Tim Shoveller, managing director of the Network Rail and South West Trains alliance, said: 'Bringing the Waterloo international terminal into permanent use has been made



The international platforms at Waterloo have had no fare-paying passengers since the last Eurostar train pulled out on 13 November 2007

possible by working with many organisations, including the Department for Transport, and is vital for the much-needed development of the railway across the south and south west of England. It has been talked about for many years, we have shown it is possible and we remain committed to bringing platform 20 into permanent use by April 2014.'

There is no firm timetable for reopening platforms 21, 22, 23, and 24 at Waterloo, where passenger numbers are predicted to rise by 51% over the next decade.



PEAK PRACTICE

Andy Botham, a train driver for 25 years and an ASLEF rep for 20, has been elected as Labour Party councillor for Matlock to

Derbyshire County Council. He helped Labour take control of the council, which the Tories had run since 2009. Andy, 45, was born and brought up in Matlock and, apart from ten years 'down south', has spent his life in his home town. He got 1,114 votes, beating the Conservative candidate into second place, the Liberal Democrat into third and UKIP a distant fourth. 'No one can remember the last time Matlock had a Labour councillor,' said Andy. 'I think it was Charles White and I went to a school named after him; that's how long ago it was.'

Train owners ship millions offshore

Rolling stock companies sent millions of pounds in dividends offshore last year – money which, says ASLEF general secretary Mick Whelan, "should have been reinvested in Britain's railways, not shipped offshore and out of the country".

Angel Trains paid £44.8 million to its five owners through a holding company in Jersey called Willow Bidco. Eversholt Rail, whose ultimate parent company is based in Luxembourg, paid £40 million to its three backers, 3i Infrastructure, Star Capital and the infrastructure arm of Morgan Stanley. Porterbrook has not yet published its accounts but it is owned by a company based in Jersey and is expected to send a similar sum abroad.

The three companies have delivered more than £700 million in dividends through offshore holding companies since 2008.

The three rolling stock companies, which were set up in 1994 ahead of the Conservative government's break-up of British Rail, lease passenger trains, to operators such as First Group and Stagecoach, as well as freight trains. They have had the market to themselves since Britain's railways were privatised, an arrangement criticised by the Competition Commission which concluded in 2009 that it could have cost the taxpayer as much as £100 million a year by overcharging operators to lease trains.

The railways cost the public purse about £1 billion a year under British Rail. That figure has soared to £4 billion a year since privatisation.



Emily Wilding's sacrifice was marked by a unique event in central London

A century of Suffragettes celebrated

On the 14 June 1913, over 6,000 women dressed in white marched through the streets of London to pay their respects to Emily Wilding Davison at St George's Church, Bloomsbury. Emily lost her life in a dramatic act of protest when she placed herself in the path of the king's horse to highlight the cause of women's suffrage. A memorial service is to be held at the church to celebrate Emily's legacy in our modern lives.

AVERAGE TAX REFUND OVER £200

The union-backed tax code review service has secured average tax recovery sums of £205.10 for ASLEF members, and a total of £461,682. Our agents are Personal Taxation Services (Marketing) and are based at St Thomas Place, Grosvenor House, Stockport, Cheshire, SK1 3TZ. Their phone number is 0161 480 7717.

Sheffield rail boost – by 2020

The good news for Sheffield is that its rail links with London and Manchester are to improve radically. The bad is that it won't happen for seven years.

Fast, cleaner electric trains between Sheffield and London will be running by 2020 which will reduce journey times between Sheffield and London from just over two hours to around one hour 45 minutes. Extra tracks between Sheffield and Manchester allowing more trains to run are to be completed by 2018.

A further electrification project between Sheffield and Doncaster is being discussed for the 2020s.

Meanwhile, trans Pennine improvements, which include dualling the track and providing a second platform at Dore and Totley Station plus passing loops for slow passenger and freight trains in the Hope Valley, should be completed by 2018.

Why would anyone want to make the workplace more dangerous?

'If a builder constructs a house for a man but does not make his work strong, with the result that this house collapses, and so causes the death of the owner, the builder shall be put to death.' That was Hamorabi, Emperor of Babylon, in 1750BC. 'Health and safety' has come in for a bit of a battering in some quarters but, at its heart, health and safety is about preventing injuries and saving people's lives.

In *Safe at Work* (Spokesman Books, £15) Dave Putson, health and safety representative for the public services union PCS in the London Courts, traces the history of legislation

in Britain since 1700 when there were no safety provisions or Acts of Parliament in place. As Mark Serwotka, general secretary of the PCS, says in his introduction, this book could hardly be more timely. 'It is a history of the struggles for rights; the right to form a trade union; the right to vote; the right for dignity in the workplace and fair pay; the right for education, welfare and health care. All fought for in the face of fierce resistance from those who felt their profits might be affected or their political power constrained.'

Today, many bosses want to reverse these hard-won gains. 'Our Prime Minister echoes the worst of the 19th century's irresponsible industrialists when he says health and safety is an "albatross round the neck of British businesses" and he wants to "kill off the health and safety culture for good".'

'Workers only got these rights and protections because they organised and fought for them. It is a depressing but familiar tale of history that, today, we need to fight those same battles again.'



Union calls for protection for train drivers

ASLEF general secretary Mick Whelan has called for greater protection for train drivers from vandals and trespassers on the railways as two more trains were attacked. 'This is becoming an everyday occurrence,' says Mick. 'Our members have the right to go about their occupation without worrying about their safety – and if the driver is under attack, so too are the passengers.'

Sooner or later, he says, these attacks will lead to a major incident. That's why he is calling for better education in schools, on stations and in communities to warn potential vandals of the seriousness of this dangerous anti-social behaviour.

The chair of the union's Motherwell branch was injured when a stone was thrown through his window as he drove between Blantyre and Newton stations just after 10pm, and a Preston to London Virgin Pendolino train was delayed for three hours at Crewe after it was attacked by youths who caused £6,000 worth of damage.

'Tossing objects at trains is not a bit of fun,' says Mick. 'It is dangerous vandalism that could lead to a loss of life.' Mick called for a continual process of education, rather than just 'an outbreak of activity' after an incident.

Ton up to raise money

Dean Anderson, a driver at Caterham depot, is riding in the London road race on Sunday 4 August – a 100 mile course following the Olympic route – to raise funds for St Catherine's Hospice in Crawley.

'I lost my father-in-law on 25 December,' explains Dean. 'He died of heart failure at the age of 67. In the last seven weeks of his life he was cared for by St Catherine's; I cannot tell you what a difference this made to my family at an extremely difficult time.'



Dean is getting on his bike for a good cause

'The hospice is funded, almost all, by charitable donations. It would mean so much to me and my family if you could sponsor me, pennies or pounds, anything to help this wonderful cause.' You can sponsor Dean by visiting www.justgiving.com/Dean-Anderson1



René González (holding the baby) with his family in Cuba

René González home at last

After more than 14 years in a US jail and on supervised release in Florida, René González, the Cuban anti-terrorist fighter, is home at last with his family following the decision of an

American court to grant him permission to stay in Cuba.

René was in the country for two weeks humanitarian leave to attend the memorial service for his recently deceased father. The

court granted him permission to stay on condition that he renounce his US citizenship.

Although this is a cause for celebration for René, his family and all those who have campaigned for the freedom of the Cuban Five, his four compatriots – Ramón Labañino, Gerardo Hernández, Antonio Guerrero and Fernando González – are still in prison in the United States – and campaigners say the fight for their freedom continues until they, too, are back home with their families.

TRIUMPH IN SARUM



ASLEF's Tom Corbin was elected as a Labour Party candidate for Salisbury, where he has lived and worked for 35 years. His wife Caroline Corbin was elected, too, and with another Labour candidate, Michael Osment, also elected, it meant Labour took all three seats from Bemerton ward on the city council, beating the Conservative, UKIP and Green candidates.

LEVEL CROSSINGS: THE DEATH TOLL RISES

Nine people have been killed on level crossings in the past year and 453 drivers and pedestrians barely escaped with their lives in what Network Rail describes as 'near misses'. Trains smashed into 10 vehicles and 33 vehicles hit and damaged barriers. Critics say level crossings are a '19th century solution in an era of high-speed rail' and want traffic to be re-routed over or under the railway tracks. The cost would be 'a small price to pay for public and staff safety'.



Injury compensation gets tougher to claim



The Conservative-led coalition has ripped up the rule book for people trying to get justice for an accident or injury or work-related disease.

VICTORIA PHILLIPS, Head of Employment Rights at Thompsons Solicitors, explains the implications of the new law – and what ASLEF is doing to help...

THE government's devastating attack on access to justice for injured people means that, from 1 April, if you're injured in an accident (at work or otherwise) or develop a work-related disease in England or Wales, only trade union members and their families will continue to benefit from a free, independent and specialist legal service that guarantees them 100% of their compensation.

The Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act became law last year, in spite of massive opposition from trade

unions, victim support groups and civil rights organisations. The Act ripped up the current arrangements that enable genuinely injured people to get legal representation without the risk of having to pay out of their own pocket if their claim is unsuccessful.

This is because the guilty party, usually the employer or their liability insurer, will no longer have to pay the insurance premium that the injured person takes out to cover the cost of things such as medical reports and court fees should they lose.

Such costs-called

disbursements in legal jargon – are usually vital in order to pursue a case and to prove who or what caused the accident that led to the injury, the exact nature of the injury and the short- and long-term prognosis. But they can cost thousands of pounds.

ONLY THERE IF YOU DON'T NEED THEM

So, unless a case is going to be very straightforward, and won't require lots of investigation and reports (which is rare in work-related accidents and disease cases), non-union solicitors are unlikely to take a case on because of the risk of not getting paid.

As well as removal of the losing defendant's obligation to pay the insurance premium, the successful claimant lawyer will no longer be able to claim what is known as a 'success fee' from the losing side. This fee, usually paid by the employer or their liability insurer, recognised the risk that the claimant's lawyer would not get paid anything for their work should the claim fail.

This enabled them to take the risk of no payment in unsuccessful cases, meaning that they could take on cases that might be risky, such as complex injury claims and test cases.

Success fees have not been banned by the government, but the injury victim and not the guilty party will have to pay them. Lawyers will be allowed to take up to 25% of a claimant's compensation to cover some of their costs, because they will no longer be able to claim them from the losing side. So getting 100% compensation may well be a thing of the past.

NO RISK OR NO TAKE

Although many lawyers may continue after 1 April to promise no deductions from compensation, they are likely to refuse to take on risky cases which they cannot be sure will succeed.

Or they may agree to take on a complicated claim, but only if the claimant is able to pay up front for fees, investigations and medical reports.

ASLEF has always said that members and their families who are injured because of the negligence of someone else, and who successfully claims compensation, should receive it in full.

An injured person doesn't have to accept being referred to a law firm provided by an insurance company just because they may have legal expenses insurance added on to their household or motor policies. They have a right to genuinely independent legal advice, not to be told what their claim is worth by a lawyer who has been given the case by an insurance company.

That is why ASLEF has been working closely with Thompsons since the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act became law, in order to work out ways in which claims can still be supported.

As a result we have negotiated an agreement which will continue to guarantee members of the union and their family members in England and Wales 100% of their damages and the ability to instruct lawyers directly. To benefit from this service, members and their families with personal injury claims should call 0808 100 8009.





Matt is speaking at this year's union annual conference (AAD)

Matthew Collins saw, first hand, how the far-right rose from a few hundred skinheads meeting on football terraces and in the back rooms of pubs to men in suits with seats on local councils and the European Parliament. As a member of the National Front, BNP, and Combat 18, he witnessed the rise of the extreme right via alcohol-fuelled violence and the ballot box. Then he switched sides...

In 1987, when I was fifteen, I had a poster of Margaret Thatcher up on my bedroom wall. One day I came home from school to discover that my brother had drawn, in pen, a Hitler moustache on her upper lip and a swastika on her arm.

His act of bedroom-invading vandalism was on the money, as I had already joined the National Front and was out campaigning with the BNP, too, as I tried to define my position in society under Mrs Thatcher.

As it turned out, the National Front was already a spent force. It never recovered from the mauling Thatcher gave them in 1979, the year she was elected after, in the NF's sullen opinion, stealing their policies on immigration. The BNP, a relatively new party made up of people who left the NF in 1982, shared none of the Front's difficulties in positioning themselves in the political spectrum. They were unashamed Nazis.

We were all weirdos in tiny cult-like sects of a few hundred members scattered around the UK. Meeting in pubs and smoky backrooms, we planned world domination and violent revolution. There were the hard men, ageing race-haters with battered and weathered faces and me, fresh-faced and angry, ready to take on the world. We never made the news; few people even raised their eyebrows at us as we were so insignificant.

By the time Tony Blair became Prime Minister in 1997, I was living in Australia. I'd done six years in the far-right, running with the

I was a fascist but now I believe in hope not hate

NF, the BNP and even the tiny terror group Combat 18 (named after the first and eighth letters of the alphabet). I'd found myself staring down the barrels of pistols being packed into envelopes in bedrooms, smashed my way into meetings to attack trade unionists and taken part in acts of violence unimaginable for someone who had only ever asked the question 'where does a white, working-class boy from Lewisham fit in?'

STARING DOWN THE BARREL

One of the last things I had witnessed before my departure was the election of an out and out Nazi on to the council on the Isle of Dogs in 1993. Finally, we made headline news; we'd done the unthinkable by getting elected. I say 'we' but that's not strictly true. Since 1990 I had been passing information to anti-fascist journalists. It's been portrayed as some kind of James Bond plotline, but the reality was that staring down the barrel of a gun and watching people preparing themselves for eventual murder had taken a toll on me and I'd decided to switch sides. It wasn't brave either, it was, in fact, an act of near suicide. In 1993, when Combat 18 was turning itself into a formidable gang of violent, neo-Nazi drug dealers, I spilled all on a television documentary and fled the country.

But the far-right rose. The BNP replaced their leader with the NF's old leader and began wearing cheap suits and cheap aftershave to go out electioneering. The debates I'd had with myself all those years ago had become a national obsession. Tony Blair had blurred the lines between right and left and, in 2002, we began to see the results of all the hard work the backroom plotters had put in.

My old friends, the Jew-haters, Holocaust-deniers, and violent racist thugs of my youth, were now fully engaged in the political process. Surely this was a good thing, somebody asked, better than them battering black teenagers on the streets and attacking little old ladies on picket lines?

BIGOTS IN DISGUISE

But the truth is, they had never changed their views. By 2009 the BNP had two MEPs and near control of an East London council. The organisation I now work for sent out a million pieces of literature to homes to turn the tide against the BNP, and in 2010 we helped



Matt with his book 'Hate'. Now he has hope instead. (picture: Pete Dunwell)

Left: Matt's book is 'my life in the British far right'



Matt in the bad old days: selling the National Front newspaper

remove every councillor the BNP had in East London and every councillor, bar two, the BNP had elsewhere in the country.

Now we see a desperate BNP returning to type. They use less of the faux suave ideology that convinced people they were only ever an anti-immigration party. They're back banging on about Jews and immigrants in the old fashioned way, and the Irish too.

People don't like what they see or what they hear. In 2014, we'll finally remove Nick Griffin from his seat in Europe and send him, and his party, back to the backroom of the pub. And lock the doors this time.

○ Matthew Collins is the author of **Hate: My Life in the British Far Right** (Biteback Publishing, £8.99)

CAPITAL FOCUS: SUCCESSES, CHALLENGES AND SOLIDARITY UNDERGROUND



The capital's transport system is seldom out of the news. The issues just keep coming, ranging from Crossrail development, industrial relations problems, driverless trains, busy-body Boris, safety issues ... it never stops.

We asked our reps to update us on some of its activities in the capital, and on these pages they outline the main concerns at the moment. It is a snapshot of an industry in constant flux as transport is employed as a political publicity tool rather than a vital public service. But it is also a picture of a union that is active, involved and informed; and a membership that

constantly shows its determination to secure a top class service for Londoners and a decent return for its own labour.

I'm sure that you, like me, salute their solidarity, applaud their aims and support their actions.

Mick Whelan, General Secretary

Threats, blackmail and driverless trains

Finn Brennan reports on how London Underground, spurred on by the Mayor, seeks to undermine its employees and our union with a threat that is really more propaganda than practicality ...

THE March edition of London Underground's in-house magazine, OTM, was dedicated to the company's vision for the future. There was an article on Crossrail, another on 'wave and pay' technology and a less than fascinating spread on something called 'the three-phased journey' that insomniacs may find of use.

Oh, and on page 8, a half page picture of a proposed new tube train which it seems will have many exciting new features, but lacks one very basic old one. A driving cab.

This is the 'driverless train' that Mayor Johnson regularly announces is fast approaching, while conveniently forgetting that TfL doesn't actually have any money to pay for them yet.

But what really infuriated me, was the quote from COO Howard Collins (currently busying packing his suitcase as he heads off to his new job in Sydney) 'we want to involve more of our people' in discussing the future alongside a promise of 'full engagement and discussion with staff before any roll out of driverless technology.'

In truth, the one thing LU has been determined to do is avoid discussing their plans with the elected representatives of 'their people'. We first discovered that the 'deep tube project' existed from a reference to it buried on page 60 of a 200 page document on TfL's budget plans. It took a year for the company to admit that it really existed! And it was only when we presented them with a leaked copy of their own Operational Strategy paper that they

begrudgingly accepted that they just might have to talk to us about their plans - but only of course when it suited them to do so!

WE'RE NOT FOOLED BY MESSAGES OF DOOM

Management's strategy is very clear and transparent, use the threat of driverless trains to blackmail drivers into accepting 'flexibility' while avoiding negotiations with trade unions and continually drip feeding information to staff in the hope that they can create a sense of inevitability about the changes they want. It's a strategy that has already led them into a series of localised disputes, each of which has ended with resolutions favourable to us, and now risks drawing them in to a combine wide confrontation. Because we are simply not going to allow them to get away with it.

We know that they want to push through changes to agreements at local and line level so that they can play off depot against depot and line against line. But combine wide agreements are our only guarantee of job security and protecting salary and conditions.

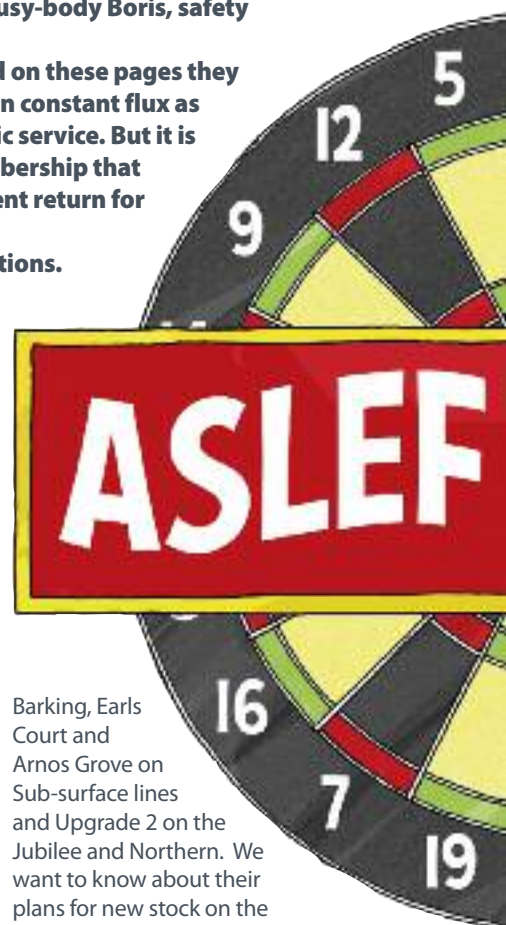
CHANGE BY NEGOTIATION, NOT IMPOSITION

ASLEF has now listed in the negotiating machinery upgrade related items from each line on the Underground, from the testing of obstacle detection equipment on the Waterloo and City to the future of train crew depots at

Barking, Earls Court and Arnos Grove on Sub-surface lines and Upgrade 2 on the Jubilee and Northern. We want to know about their plans for new stock on the Bakerloo and Piccadilly lines and later running at weekends. Drivers deserve to be told the truth about issues that affect our future. We are insisting that now is the time for management to start talking. We will not accept being fobbed off with phoney promises of 'engagement' so that management can try to impose things on us at a time of their choosing.

We are not afraid of change, we all understand that new technology may have an impact on the job we do. But we are utterly determined that any changes will only come through negotiated agreements and on terms that are acceptable to our members. We know that we will have huge challenges in the years ahead, but with the support of our members we have the experience, the ability and if necessary, the industrial muscle to deal with them.

Management have a choice; start talking to us openly and honestly now about the future or face the consequences of an inevitable combine wide dispute. Let's hope they realise that it is better to discuss issues around a table than on a picket line.



CHALLENGES

ID



A tale of two disputes ...

BOXING DAY: STILL SLUGGING IT OUT

At LU we're not sure what the longest industrial dispute is – but our Boxing Day dispute looks like heading for the record. The basis of the 26 December dispute is that ASLEF believes drivers who don't volunteer for duty should be allowed quality time off with their families on this day. We've proposed a dozen ways to resolve the dispute and LU have rejected them all.

Last year (the third involving strike action on Boxing Day) LU's managing director Mike Brown, with his vast expertise and host of Human Resource specialists, reverted to the lowest tactic available: he decided to threaten ASLEF drivers with their livelihood. In fact, he wrote to our members even as the general secretary was discussing solutions with senior LU management – including Mike Brown!

His tactic ensured a backlash that led to a solid strike.

Given LU's record of violating agreements, the fact that they have come up with no initiatives and have offered no meetings, next year looks like round four of the Boxing Day dispute.

BAKERLOO: SOLID MEMBERS BRING SUCCESS

Over a decade ago an 'over-carried' passenger was crushed to death. As a result detrainment staff were introduced to ensure passengers weren't carried into terminating sidings. Although not fool-proof, the number of over-carries was minimalized.

Then, two years ago, following consultation, LU unilaterally removed the detrainment staff.

Drivers initially welcomed this as the system didn't work but since then the number of passengers being over carried increased. LU failed to see that whereas ten years ago passengers read newspapers, they are increasingly 'plugged in' to all sorts of media devices: so they are oblivious to announcements like, 'All change please, this train terminates here'.

Over-carries literally increased a hundred-fold, passengers forced their way out of carriages and staff faced increasing abusive and aggression.

Despite union attempts, LU did nothing to remedy the situation and ASLEF members decided to physically detrain their own trains. The result on the Bakerloo line was chaos. One in six trains was cancelled on a daily basis with the knock-on effect of packed trains. After two months of this solidly backed action, the company bowed to pressure and introduced a new procedure that has, to date, proved

successful.

All of which goes to prove that if drivers stick together and show discipline, we can achieve anything. We would like to commend all the drivers on the Bakerloo line who made this dispute a 100% success.

Short underground

ANTI-DEPRESSANT TRIAL

London Underground is undertaking a trial for train operators (drivers) who are on anti-depressants but who are stood down from driving duties for the duration. The volunteer trial will be a three-stage process of getting used to the medication, being monitored performing driving while taking medication and then confirming it was a success

FATIGUE

The union is championing a fatigue initiative to

- Monitor safety issues where fatigue may have been mentioned as a cause
- Seek an agreement to ensure H&S reps monitor the duty sheets to see that the ORR 2012 guidance on fatigue risk management register (FRMR) is followed (but not in place of IR reps who currently do the scrutinising)
- Ensuring those casting the sheets are aware of the FRMR as per the ORR requirements

THOROUGH TRAINING FOR SIGNAL CHANGE

The Northern Line is introducing a new signalling system known as TBTC (Transmission Based Train Control) similar to that operating on the

Jubilee Line. The traditional 'colour light' signals that stand beside the railway will be replaced by an 'in-cab' signalling system that is monitored by the driver via the TOD (Train Operator Display) unit.

We fought for a training package to fully equip our members to deal with this major change.

A pilot course was developed by September last year and seen by management and health and safety reps. The union insisted on changes that management were reluctant to concede but after a threat of a ballot most of our outstanding issues were resolved.

The first of the newly appointed signalling areas covering High Barnet to West Finchley opened in February of 2013. So what lessons were learned?

- Simulators need to be aircraft standard before it can teach driving skills. They will be increasingly important for training and we need to define our needs clearly.
- Pressure from reps needs to be constant if we are to achieve well-trained safe driving standards
- Communications with members is vital, even, as we had to, it involves standing on platforms handing out notices.

We had support from everyone from local reps to executive members Terry Wilkinson and general secretary Mick Whelan during this exercise. It was vital we got it right – and thanks to you all, we have!

● Thanks for compiling this report go to **Terry Wilkinson, Finn Brennan, Richard Baxter, Jason Wyatt, Dean Forsyth, Gary Comfort, and Steve Crowley**

Up the Junction with the stars

VIC RASKIN, a railwayman for fifty years, and a stalwart of our Battersea branch, tells **KEITH RICHMOND** of his brushes with the glitz and glamour of the British film industry...

IT'S not every day you go into work and, instead of taking commuters into the capital, or moving freight around the country, find yourself working with a big star on a big film. But that's what happened to Vic Raskin when, in June 1967, he found himself driving a train into Clapham Junction – again and again – until, at last, director Peter Collinson shouted 'Cut!'

Up the Junction, starring Dennis Waterman, Suzy Kendall, Adrienne Posta, Maureen Lipman, Liz Fraser and Susan George, was one of the most popular films of the year when it was released in 1968. It was based on a book by Nell Dunn, published in 1963, which had already been turned by Ken Loach into an acclaimed Wednesday Play for the BBC, and was a gritty, realistic, 'kitchen sink' depiction of working-class life in the area of Battersea, south London, around Clapham Junction.

Vic, a member for many years of Battersea branch, recalls how he had just run three cars into Clapham Junction when 'a rather lovely boy, green velvet suit, pink shirt and yellow tie, asked me to come in again and went and chalk marked the platform where they wanted me to stop.' The panoply

of a film crew at work, even for a couple of minutes' screen time for Polly, 'a posh middle-class blonde from Chelsea slumming it in Battersea,' played by Suzy Kendall, to look out of the carriage window and alight from the train, was a wonder for Vic to behold.

'There were dozens of people hanging around, including all these extras on £4 a day when I was getting £7 a week as a driver, and they waved to me from the side, and said "do it again" and again.

'And then, as I got ready to take the train down the sidings while everyone had a break, Suzy Kendall came up and said, "Can I have a ride in your cab?" So I took her down the sidings, changed ends, and got out my cheese and onion sandwiches – she had half my sandwiches and half my coffee – and then she asked me, "How do you drive these things?" And I had her driving up and down the sidings while we were on our break.'

Then it was back to work and take after take. 'Eight times till we got it right,' says Vic, adding ruefully, 'I saw the film, but they cut me out.'

That wasn't his only brush with the magic of the silver screen. When Richard Attenborough made a film of the musical

Oh! What a Lovely War, Vic was in it. 'They got an old steam engine, the boiler had had it, parked it in Brighton, and I sat on it as a driver from those days, dancing up and down, with a smoke bomb inside the fire box, so smoke was pouring out the chimney.

'Then, later, I was near the catering vans on the concourse, walking past Richard



Top: Suzy Kendall with Vic Raskin on platform 17 at Clapham Junction during the filming of Up the Junction



Attenborough's Rolls Royce, when he stuck his head out the window and said, "Driver, come in here," so I got in with Richard Attenborough, and he opens this hamper, cold roast chicken and God knows what, champagne, although I wasn't allowed to drink it, and he was telling me all about his model railway set. He had, he said, six attic rooms, at the top of his house, as somewhere to run his model railways. Another world...'

Vic's a Cockney; he was born at Bow, in East London, within the sound of the bells of St Mary-le-Bow, in 1931. He was, like a lot of children, evacuated from the capital to the country at the start

of the Second World War. He and the girl next door found themselves living, with a retired miner and his wife, in a cottage in mid-Wales with no gas, no electricity and no running water; the toilet was a bucket in the shed.

'We lasted three months. We slept on an old brass bedstead in the attic under potato sacks sewn together for blankets. She was a Shirley Temple type, blonde, her ringlets got pulled at the local school, and I got beaten up for looking out for her. The headmaster didn't like Londoners,



Vic on the sea front at Seaton in Devon

we were utterly miserable, so a couple of days before Christmas, when the old boy went to sleep, I said, "We're going home". We packed our suitcases – we didn't have much – crept down the ladder from the attic, climbed out onto the sloping roof, shut the window, slid down the roof and walked to the station where we got a train to Cardiff, with no money, and no ticket.

'There, a woman with four kids talking Cockney went through the barrier, we followed, and she found she'd got two extra kids. "What are you doing?" she asked as we got on the Paddington train. "Running away." And she said "That's why I've come down to get my kids, they don't like it." We didn't get into London until 4am Sunday morning and my mother and father got a big surprise when I clambered into the Anderson shelter later that day.'

He was back in London for the worst of the Blitz by German bombers as the Luftwaffe tried to destroy the docks. 'The Germans always came over Sunday lunchtime. One day, the sirens went off, father grabbed the Sunday paper, half a bottle of whisky, his pipe and baccy, and shot off to the Anderson shelter at the bottom of the garden. Mother poured the soup back off the plates into the pot and got to the door of the basement kitchen. I heard this bomb coming, because they whistled, and said I would wait here while it went by, but it



went through our roof – 800lb of high explosive – and into the basement behind me and blew up. The house lifted up and I could see all around. Then it started to come down, I got under the stone sink and, as luck would have it, the rafters hit the boiler and stone sink and stayed off me. Everything went blank but, 15 hours later, they dug me out. The house had gone, and so had each house on either side. The Civil Defence guy who pulled me out said, "You are one lucky 10 year old." But all my dad said was, "Where's the bloody soup?"

Vic hadn't managed much schooling – 'the Daily Mirror taught me to read and write' – and when his mother said it was time he got a job he joined the railway, at Stewarts Lane, as a cleaner. 'I was 5ft so they put me down the pit underneath the engines and I



Vic in the Hook & Parrot on Seaton sea front



came out covered in oil. But once steam got into my blood I wanted to drive the bloody things! I was a cleaner, then pass fireman, and in 1957 made driver. I ended up doing 49 years and five months on the railways. With diesel everything is closed in; with steam, you've got steam in one ear, fire burning your overalls, and it's an achievement to get from one end of the line to the other. An engine wouldn't do well if the driver and fireman didn't do well. It was a living thing.'



Vic runs for office

He was a union man all his life, too. 'Tom Stuckey at Stewarts Lane had the biggest nose you've ever seen, like Pinocchio, and as I was booking on, he said, "ere you, you ain't joined the ASLEF, here's a form, fill it in". He became a rep and is still, living in retirement by the sea in Devon, as proud of what he achieved for his colleagues as he is of being a driver in the age of steam.

'It's been good life', he smiles. 'And I was never stuck up the junction...'

A HUNDRED YEARS OF UNION

The June 1913 ASLEF Locomotive Journal reflected a growing union movement while a particular manager is credited with boosting recruitment ...!

HALF A MILLION NEW TRADE UNIONISTS!

Nota Bene related the progress the progress made by the trade union movement during 1911. "I find that the membership of registered trade unions increased in 1911 by virtually half a million and the funds by £454,872. The total membership of the unions rose to nearly two and a half millions, while the funds increased to a total of £6,326,712. I notice the Associated Society is among the wealthier unions, and in 1911 ranked

eighth on a money basis, the funds being given as £185,815, equivalent to £7 18s 9d per member."

MANAGERS RECRUITMENT EFFORT!

Meanwhile, Organising Secretary Mr W Warwick reported about a depot where "the men have been asleep for some time, or perhaps it would be more correct to say they have no time for anything but work and sleep, and this has blinded them to the

fact that they are among the worst paid in the country. I have visited them on more than one occasion, but they seem to have no time or inclination to attend meetings. However a change of foreman has had the desired effect and there is almost a rush to join our Society."

SPEEDY INQUEST

Organising Secretary Mr H Parfitt reported going to "Pontardulais, making enquiries concerning a fatal accident to a London and Western Railway fireman, who was killed when on duty at that station on the previous Wednesday at about 10.0 a.m., the inquest being held the same day at 3.0 p.m.!"

ASSOCIATED SOCIETY OF LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEERS AND FIREMEN SUMMARY OF FINANCIAL INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2012

Under the provisions of Section 32A of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 ASLEF is obliged to provide members with a statement summarising its financial affairs.

Income and expenditure

	£
Total income	5,102,390
Total expenditure	5,284,921
£4,963,309 of total income comprised payments in respect of membership.	

Political Income and Expenditure

The figures above include £123,438 income and £148,173 expenditure in respect of the political fund.

Salaries and Benefits

	Salary	Employer's National Insurance contributions	Pension contributions	Benefits	Total
	£	£	£	£	£
M Whelan, General Secretary	84,460	9,439	22,550		116,449
A Donnelly, President	16,813	673			17,486

Executive Committee

H Bradley	30,791	3,079			33,870
D Calfe	10,344	193			10,537
M Colombini	36,509	3,783			40,292
B Corbett	29,703	2,823			32,526
H Kaye	8,485	804			9,289
N Gibson	25,213	2,653			27,866
T McDonald	29,061	2,397			31,458
T Wilkinson	29,643	1,407			31,050

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF ASLEF

We have audited the financial statements of the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen (ASLEF) for the year ended 31 December 2012 which comprise the Income and Expenditure Account, the Balance Sheet and the related notes. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

This report is made solely to the union's members, as a body, in accordance with Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the union's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditors' report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the union and the union's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

RESPECTIVE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND AUDITORS

As explained more fully in the Statement of ASLEF Executive Committee's Responsibilities, the ASLEF's Executive Committee are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view. Our responsibility is to audit and express an opinion on the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland). Those standards require us to comply with the Auditing Practices Board's Ethical Standards for Auditors.

SCOPE OF THE AUDIT OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

An audit involves obtaining evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements sufficient to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or error. This includes an assessment of: whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the union's circumstances and have been consistently applied and adequately disclosed; the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by the ASLEF Executive Committee; and the overall presentation of the financial statements. In addition, we read all the financial and non-financial information in the General Secretary's Report to identify material inconsistencies with the audited financial statements. If we become aware of any apparent material misstatements or inconsistencies we consider the implications for our report.

OPINION ON FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of ASLEF's affairs as at 31 December 2012 and of its deficit for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.

MATTERS ON WHICH WE ARE REQUIRED TO REPORT BY EXCEPTION

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the union has not maintained a satisfactory system of control over its transactions in accordance with the requirements of that section; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures within the form AR21 of Officers' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Chantrey Vellacott DFK LLP

Chartered Accountants
Statutory Auditor
LONDON
11 March 2012

IRREGULARITY STATEMENT

Under Section 32A(6a) of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 we are obliged to publish the following statement. A member who is concerned that some irregularity may be occurring or has occurred in the conduct of the financial affairs of the union may take steps with a view to investigating further, obtaining clarification and if necessary securing regularisation of that conduct.

The member may raise any such concern with such one or more of the following as it seems appropriate to raise it with; the officials of the union, the trustees of the property of the union, the auditor or auditors of the union, the Certification Officer (who is an independent officer appointed by the Secretary of State) and the police.

Where a member believes that the financial affairs of the union have been or are being conducted in breach of the law or in breach of the rules of the union and contemplates bringing civil proceedings against the union or responsible officials or trustees, he should consider obtaining independent legal advice.



General Secretary Mick Whelan was presented with a piece of engraved crystal by the Saltley branch last month, in recognition of his time as their District Organiser.

'I have fond memories of my days working with the branch as District 6 Organiser over the years,' Mick says. 'I hope they think I am doing an equally good job as their general secretary.'

Saltley branch secretary Adrian Harnett thanked Mick, his successor Dicky Fisher and executive committee member Dave Calfe for attending.

Cheerio to Charlie

On Sunday 24 March around 40 friends and colleagues gathered in the Hog's Head in Wolverhampton to give a farewell send-off to Charlie Morgan who was retiring.

Charlie started in 1971 as a secondman at Bescot before being made redundant. He then moved to Eastleigh before leaving the industry in 1978.

He returned to the railway in 1984 as a guard at Bescot and then moved back into the footplate grade as a driver at Saltley in 1989.

The partial closure in 1993 saw him



Bidding farewell to a popular driver are (left to right) Bob Earlam, Stuart Longdon, Charlie Morgan himself, Dicky Fisher and Graeme Thorne

move to New Street and finally to Wolverhampton in 2004.

The branch would like to thank District 6 Organiser Dicky Fisher for coming along to the meeting and for presenting Charlie with his certificate. Knowing him to be an avid railway mug collector, his colleagues also

presented Charlie with several mugs in a presentation box as a gift.

The merriment went well on into the evening and all the members of the Wolverhampton Branch wish Charlie the best of health in his retirement.

Nigel Harkness, Secretary, Wolverhampton Branch



Brighton branch chairman Steve Chatfield presented Brother Paul Evans with his 20-year badge at the branch's April meeting

Upcoming events

OLD OAK COMMON – 11 JUNE

The Paddington (Old Oak Common) Old Boys reunion is to be held at the Acton Garden Village club ('Ponderosa') on 11 June. Please inform any of 'the old boys' with whom you are in contact. The traditional invites will not be sent out, but for further information contact robertmorse@hotmail.co.uk.

CRICKLEWOOD - 28 JUNE

The 30th Anniversary Reunion of ex-Cricklewood staff will take place on Friday 28 June, meeting at Kidderminster for a 12:20 departure to Bridgnorth. For further information contact Grahame Nash (Bristol) or Bob Hodson (Wolverhampton).

EX-WEST ANGLIA BR REUNION – 13 JULY

There will be a reunion of ex-West Anglia British Rail on 13 July at the Crown pub in Broxbourne at 18:00. Come along and remember days when 'the job got done and it was fun'! For further information contact Les Bennett at Bishop's Stortford.

ASLEF FOOTBALL – 24 JULY

The Andy Viner/Mick Turrell memorial cup will be contested on 24 July at Market Street Islington (nearest tube Caledonian Road). Six-a-side teams will compete. To spectate, enter a team or make a donation, contact Deborah Reay@sky.com

Eastleigh welcomes GS

Eastleigh branch was delighted to welcome the general secretary Mick Whelan, national organiser Simon Weller, executive committee member Marz Colombini and DBS Rep Bernard Kennedy to our April meeting.

The general secretary presented a 50-year medallion to former DBS driver Mike Hunt, who was one of the last of the drivers at Eastleigh to start on the steam. Mike was both a cleaner and fireman at Eastleigh.

Mick gave an overview of the union's various activities both within freight and in the wider railway community. He was followed by Nigel and Simon who updated

the branch on the progress of pay negotiations with DBS. Simon also spoke about changes to railway pensions prior to a question and answer session.

Mick also presented long service awards to Freightline driver Paul Watson (40 years) and DBS driver Andy Marks (35 years) before we enjoyed a buffet, liquid refreshment and chat that continued well into the afternoon.



Mick presents Brother Hunt with his medallion to celebrate fifty years of ASLEF membership

Many thanks to Mick, Simon, Marz and Bernard for sparing the time to visit our branch.

Paul Barber, Secretary, Eastleigh branch



The Eastleigh branch gathers to celebrate awards, hear the general secretary – and partake of liquid refreshment!

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COLIN CHARLES FORSE DRIVER, SOLDIER, INSPECTOR AND GENT

Another piece of Bath Road depot history disappeared on 25 April at Bristol South Cemetery as a large gathering of train crew grades and management said their farewells to Colin Forse, who passed away at Weston General Hospital on 15 April after a short illness.

Born on 2 November 1933, Colin followed in his father's

footsteps on to the railway in 1949 as a booking boy at Yatton West signal box. Later he became an engine cleaner at Yatton shed, progressing to fireman and then a Bath Road depot fireman. Although he lived at Yatton he continued to work the Clevedon and Blagdon branches.

He enlisted as a soldier at Aldershot in 1952, serving at

Longmoor (ROD) and then in Egypt. He returned in 1954, became a driver in 1964 and covered a lot of turns at Bristol Barrow Road shed.

In 1975 Colin served on the ASLEF LDC at Bath Road and later became a traction inspector in 1985, carrying out a lot of work on steam specials. He retired in March 1996, and wrote a book, *A Life on the*

Railway, in 2009.

On a personal note, Colin was my first regular driver after my transfer back from Old Oak. I was privileged to work on many of the steam specials where he was the inspector. Like his father, he was always a gentleman. Our thoughts are with Colin's family.
Graham Bellamy, Bristol

TREVOR (BLUE EYES) GARGAN POPULAR PAY DAY SHOP KEEPER

It is with great sadness that I have to report the passing away of our friend and colleague, former driver Trevor Gargan, who was always known as Blue Eyes.

He passed away on the 24 March after a short spell in hospital. He was 77 years old and had been unwell for a long while. His service was held on the 8 April at St Charles Roman Catholic church in

Aigburth, Liverpool. It was well attended by railwaymen past and present.

Blue Eyes started on the railway in the early 1950s as an engine cleaner at Brunswick loco on the old Cheshire Lines railway. He spent two years doing national service in the Royal Engineers before returning to Brunswick until it closed in September 1961 and all the staff transferred to

Garston depot.

At Garston he was our pay day shop keeper, selling bacon, eggs, sausages, tea bags and shoes, 'all sizes available'. He will be greatly missed, especially by fellow members of the club who meet on Thursday afternoons.

He was a member of the welfare committee at Garston and, on finishing work, made a great job of organising our bi-



'Blue Eyes' was well liked, both on and off the job

annual days out. He is now alongside 'my Anne' as he always referred to his late wife.

Condolences to all his family. RIP Blue Eyes from all of us at the Thursday Club.
Spen Wissett, former driver

J.C. (TED) BROWN ACTIVIST AND JP

It is with regret that I report the passing of Brother JC Brown, who was born in Swansea on 12 November 1920. He moved to Didcot with his parents in 1932. Five years later he started work at the loco depot where he progressed from fireman to driver.

He was soon elected to the LCD and became a very strong branch secretary, local councillor and Justice of the Peace. On retirement he moved back to Swansea where he died on 25 February this year.

J. Lyford, retired member

PETER NEWBURY 50 YEARS ON THE FOOTPLATE

It is with great sadness that I must report the passing of Brother Peter Newbury of Hitchin branch. Pete was a branch stalwart and dedicated local representative who carried out his reps' duties with good humour and patience. One of the last steam men, Pete served for 50 years on the footplate and was proud to be presented with his 50 year medallion by the ASLEF general secretary.

Now Pete has been moved up to the top link he will be greatly missed by all who had the privilege to know him.

Peter Dunlop, retired member, Hitchin branch

GEORGE (TED) POOLEY A LOVELY MAN

Ted Pooley passed away very peacefully on 10 December at the age of 92. He started at Neasden in 1937 and began as a cleaner, progressing first to fireman and then to driver and ending up as an instructor. He retired in 1983 after 45 years service.

Whenever I mentioned his name to other drivers, they invariably remembered him and everyone said the same thing: 'What a lovely man, he was very kind and patient.' For his 92nd birthday in July, I presented him with a card signed by some of the drivers he had trained, and it made his day.

In 1998 Ted and his wife Alisha moved to Shepperton to be nearer their family. Widowed in 2002, he was cared for by his niece Linda, who he thought of as the daughter he never had. Ted was a lucky man, well thought of by the men he trained and much loved by family and friends. He will be sadly missed.

Paul De Cogan, driver, Euston

MICK SWANNELL WELL RESPECTED BEDFORD MAN

I am sorry to report that on 4 March Bedford driver Mick Swannell lost his battle with cancer at the age of 49. Mick was one of Bedford's most well respected and well liked drivers at the depot.

He joined the railway in October 2007 and always commented on how proud he was to have made the driving grade. Although he only had a short career on the railway, Mick was proud to have had the opportunity to work as a driver, and expressed this to his final days.

Mick's funeral was very well attended, with standing room only at the church, with all his friends and colleagues who turned out to support his family at this very sad time.
Gary Honey, driver, Bedford

CHRIS FARMER POPULAR LONDON BRIDGE DRIVER

It was with great sadness that I learned of the passing of my former colleague at London Bridge, Chris Farmer. Although I left the railway industry in 2002 I remained in regular contact with Chris in the last few years via social media.

Chris came to London Bridge in the early 1990s and was immensely popular at the depot, fitting in well with all the other 'Essex Men' at the 'Bridge'. Chris was a loyal member of ASLEF and always supported the trade union and the local reps.

RIP Chris.
Nigel Blennerhassett, former Branch Secretary, London Bridge



These are the pages where you talk to us. We welcome your letters, either by mail to the **ASLEF Journal at 77 St John Street London, EC1M 4NN** or by email to **journal@aslef.org.uk**. Because of our space constraints, please try to keep your contributions as short as you can. This month we continue our **STAR LETTER** feature. The immensely lucky winner will pocket a rich range of ASLEF regalia!

Help when it was needed – ‘the union is there for you’

I would like to express my sincere thanks and gratitude to Nigel Gibson, District 5 Organiser, for all his help and support during what can only be described as a horrendous 10 month issue at work, which not only affected me, but my family, too. During this time, there have been some very testing moments, but Nigel was always there to give sound advice, reassurance and, at times he provided the voice I didn't have.

He was always available to ring or meet me at any time of the day, and travelled from London to Leeds on numerous occasions which invariably involved some very early starts and late finishes; this was in addition to his duties in his district and companies.

As a rep and branch secretary I am the first to tell members that ASLEF is there for them when they need it. Nigel has more than proved this.

It would be remiss of me not to thank the general secretary for his support, too, and he clearly demonstrated that ASLEF will not sit back and allow wrongful or malicious attacks on reps and members to go unchallenged. Thankfully, the issue is now concluded to our satisfaction.

Many thanks for all the support I received from friends and colleagues at work and within ASLEF; you will probably never know how much that meant to me.

Pauline Cawood, Northern Rail driver, Leeds

Together but different

Train drivers on freight have little connection with our TOC colleagues. Only in a 35-hour week; freight is a different animal from TOC. For that reason our union should try to support us with District and EC members who have knowledge of our industry.

We all would like to be part of ASLEF, but under our own umbrella, with freight members and reps, so everyone is singing from the same hymn sheet.

Our work and conditions are not similar with the conditions and work at TOCs. If freight had its own division within ASLEF,

NIGEL HIDES A FARRAGO OF DANGEROUS VIEWS

I write in reply to the general secretary's editorial in April's Journal with the following points for members' consideration.

With the Conservative Party in disarray, and the Liberal Democrats running around like a busted flush, the biggest challenge to the return of a Labour government at the next election could well come from UKIP and their leader Nigel Farage.

Voters would do well to remember what these nasty opportunists stand for. They are increasingly drawing support from among working-class voters who find their populist attacks on immigrants, Muslims and the political establishment attractive. UKIP is enjoying the support of skilled workers and middle-class professionals who find their shallow, ill-thought out views attractive.

UKIP's economic policies are nothing short of a far-right version of George Osborne's and will do nothing

for us. They have proposed a flat rate tax of 31% for all, including the Tory millionaires, leaving the poorest earners in our society adrift, and propose abolishing national insurance contributions for employees, which will save the bosses up to £60 billion, but with no mention of how this shortfall will be made up.

They are attempting to tap into the huge amount of bigotry that is affecting our country today and to provide an avenue for the BNP to convert their perverse views and ideals into votes.

There is no doubt that the charming Farage is a politically dangerous man and UKIP is a really dangerous threat to Labour at the next general election. They must be taken seriously and exposed for what they are now, political opportunists rather like the Liberal Democrats.
John Boreham, Camarthen

the freight members who left ASLEF would return.
John Rock, freight driver

Getting up to Greenspeed on the continent

As a former ASLEF member (1972-82) I am an avid reader of the Journal on the internet. I am currently working as a Driver (Instructor) for Danish State Railways and would like to add my comments concerning DAS.

We have recently had installed a system called Greenspeed in our locomotives/multiple units and, in my opinion, it makes life a lot easier. Instead of having paper versions of both WTT and temporary speed restrictions on the driving desk, everything is shown on the screen, which also includes permanent speed restrictions, which track the train is signalled

on and the exact position of the train. It co-acts with our ATC and radio systems and works out the most economic speed required to adhere to the timetable.

We enter the train's maximum allowed speed, actual length and brake force. The screen can, of course, be adjusted for driving at night. We have also all been issued with a laptop computer so we do not have to carry a lot of heavy books around with us any more.

I'm sure it is easier to follow the screen than to look down at various bits of paper on the desk.

Alan Evans, Kalundborg depot, Denmark

Maggie may

History will, in the end, be the judge of Margaret Thatcher. Perhaps she will be remembered as a great politician who

forced this country into the modern world; who shook us by the scruff of the neck and changed our lives for the better, in spite of our wishes.

Perhaps she will be remembered as a domestic terrorist whose abuse of power and our political system destroyed countless families and forced this country into the grip of foreign business.

She may even be remembered as the person who did more damage to the people of Great Britain than any foreign aggressor ever did.

According to Facebook and Twitter, many of our younger citizens don't know who she was or what she did. Surely that is the most fitting remembrance for her. That she will for ever be just another nondescript politician among all the other nondescript politicians.

Chris Dodd, retired driver

Time to fly-by-wire?

At the risk of suffering the usual castigation, but giving a balanced outlook, may I add some points to the discussion about Driver Advisory Systems? I have no connection with any supplier of the equipment. My company council and employer are not progressing the system at the time of writing and retaining driver professionalism and distraction have been mentioned.

My employer, running mainly fixed formation trains, has had two trials; I was involved with the first which gave some good outcomes; I understand the second was less conclusive. The system was not overly expensive and would rapidly have shown savings which, yes, would benefit the operator but make funds available for other improvements. I agree that experienced drivers will know their best coasting opportunities but the system was able to compute best options when abnormal running was taking place.

I agree that it would be completely unacceptable for the system to be used to supplant driver training and knowledge, or be used to discipline drivers or introduce competition between individuals; this was the starting point with our representatives when the trials began.

Environmental concerns and sustainability are paramount and drivers have under their charge some 90% of the energy consumption of a train working, but I concluded that the strong points of a DAS were the driver enhancements. For example, it offered an optimum speed and power choice in a tight timetable where there is very little recovery time. Station approach warnings, currently part of our hazard alarm system, could have been incorporated. Correct side door opening could have been indicated. Temporary and emergency speed restrictions were to be included and updated in real time. Our trains are fitted with TASS which is not matched with

A chance to dance

On Monday 8 April I was just getting ready to head into town for our branch meeting when I heard the news that made me, as a trade unionist, "Rejoice, just rejoice". A quick change of attire was required and then I skipped into town to meet my comrades.

Alan Moss, Longsight branch



Alan celebrates in style

TPWS loop speeds, currently unmarked: DAS would alert drivers to these features, surely a good feature as AAD debates the effect TPWS interventions are having on our fraternity. It offered opportunities to drive in a more relaxed manner and produce less wear and tear on the train systems, so reducing breakdowns which cause us problems and special working. There are even possibilities that a DAS could help in warning of approaching red signals.

Many train drivers use aircraft which are fitted with auto pilot and fly-by-wire systems; are we seriously suggesting that these systems be switched off in the name of pilot professionalism? DAS is an independent system, not linked to the controls, and can be switched off if required; on these points it should be kept under review.

Robert McMillan, Wolverhampton branch

Thank you, brothers

I would like to thank all branches in District 8 for their continued support in the recent

election for the union's executive committee. I am grateful for your trust and will do all I can to justify the faith you have put in me once again.

Terry Wilkinson, executive committee

Smoke gets in your eyes

I was somewhat surprised to read Mark Smith freely admitting that he cannot safely discharge his duties as a driver if he runs out of nicotine, and disapproves of a law designed to suit the ends of only 78% of the adult population. If he has evidence debunking passive smoking myths which have eluded the scientific community, society would value his input.

Mark rightly, however, deserves our plaudits for selflessly puffing a thousand pounds a year more tax than Starbucks, Google, and Boots combined pump into our ailing economy and we pray his lungs hold up for many years to come. Keep up the good work, Mark!

Roger Sankey, Driver, Bournemouth Cross Country

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FAVERSHAM branch is selling mugs and Tee-shirts 'devoted' to Ms Thatcher! Both are £10

and illustrate the branch view of the ex-PM's vicious right-wing policies. They can be obtained from the branch website www.aslef-favershambranch.co.uk or from Andy Cooke at (email) andycooke69@hotmail.com or (mobile) 07771923831.



MOTHERWELL 100 REGALIA: To celebrate its centenary, Motherwell Branch has produced commemorative badges (£5), ties (£7 for blue, blue clip-on or maroon) and brochures (£2.50). Cheques to 'ASLEF Motherwell Branch Centenary Fund' and further information from Andy Jones on 07767077907 or motherwellbs@aslef.org.uk

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The driver's daughter accused of trying to murder the Prime Minister

There are not many rail workers' daughters who have been charged with plotting to kill a Prime Minister, but Alice Wheeldon is one, writes **CHRIS NUTTY, CHLOE** and **DEIRDRE MASON**. Although I've lived in Derby for 50 years I'd never heard of Alice. She came to my attention through a Radical History course as part of my work as a ASLEF Union Learning Rep. The course was delivered by Bill Whitehead, a lecturer at Derby University, and looked at working-class people who fought against the system and for what they believed. I told Keith Venables, the local NUT branch secretary, about the course and since then a campaign has been launched to clear Alice's name, someone's written a folk song about her, and a plaque has been erected by the civic society and city council. **KEITH VENABLES** tells her story...

We should be proud of those individuals and groups who fight to make life better for ordinary people. Alice Wheeldon was one of those people. She was the daughter of William Marshall, a locomotive driver, and was born in the railway town of Derby in 1866 where she died in 1919. She was a strong, independent woman who, with her four children - Nell, Hettie, Will, and Winnie - was active in the Co-operative movement and a determined campaigner on the big social issues of the day, particularly women's rights, conscription and opposition to the First World War.

The Wheeldons were opposed to the pointless carnage on the fields of Flanders and this opposition worried the government, especially as Derby was at the heart of Britain's manufacturing and agricultural production.

Alice, a kind and caring woman, shared the desperate concern of many mothers for Derby's young men, some of them conscientious objectors, since her son Will and son-in-law Alf Mason were both caught up in an unwinnable, unpopular and apparently endless war on the Western Front.

By 1916 the government was seeking to silence popular discontent at home so families

would continue to send their husbands and sons up the line to death in France. So a branch of the Munitions Ministry hatched a plan to discredit opponents of the war and undermine the rising tide of demands for women's rights.

PACIFISTS BECOME TARGETS

Alice and her family were targeted in an attempt to deter others from political activism. An MI5 agent provocateur, posing as a conscientious objector, sought refuge in their home and proposed a scheme to release imprisoned conscientious objectors. As two men she loved faced conscription, Alice was open to his idea to poison a prison's guard dogs to facilitate an escape. Correspondence about obtaining poison for the scheme and the conversations reported by the agent were used in a dodgy dossier to make up evidence of a plot to kill the Prime Minister (Lloyd George), the leader of the Labour Party (Arthur Henderson) and 'unnamed others'. Alice and her family were arrested as a result of this entrapment.

Alice's trial - along with Hettie, Win, and Alf Mason - was moved from Derby to the Old Bailey; partly for the purpose of getting



The memorial to Alice that was unveiled in Normanton last month

national rather than local publicity, and partly to head off the possibility of acquittal. The Attorney General, F.E. Smith, and recent manager of the government's press bureau, led the prosecution.

The government cynically used the trial to trash the reputations of opponents of the Great War. National newspapers carried lurid reports and pictures on their front pages. Alice received the maximum prison sentence. Her daughter, Hettie, was acquitted but Win and Alf Mason were also jailed. All three were refused leave to appeal. Alice was released in December 1917, because she was gravely ill, but the Masons weren't released until 1919, after the war ended with the Armistice.

RESPECTING A PIONEER

Alice's direct descendants from around the world have now got together with Derby Peoples' History to clear the family name and demonstrate that Alice and her family were innocent of all the charges, and only guilty of believing that women's rights should be on the political agenda and the stand taken by conscientious objectors should be respected. On International Workers' Day - 1 May - a blue plaque was erected in her memory at 12 Peartree Road, Normanton.

It reads: 'Alice Wheeldon - Anti-War Activist, Socialist and Suffragist'. We think the plaque is an important milestone in restoring her reputation and giving her proper recognition. And we continue the fight on 14 September with a major festival - Peace and Justice 1913/2013 - in Derby.

- For more information visit the website alicewheeldon.org or listen to the song "Alice Annie Wheeldon" on TheRobbJohnson site on Youtube.
- Derby Peoples History invite you to join their Festival of Peace and Justice on 14th September. Have a look at <http://www.derbypeopleshistory.co.uk/>

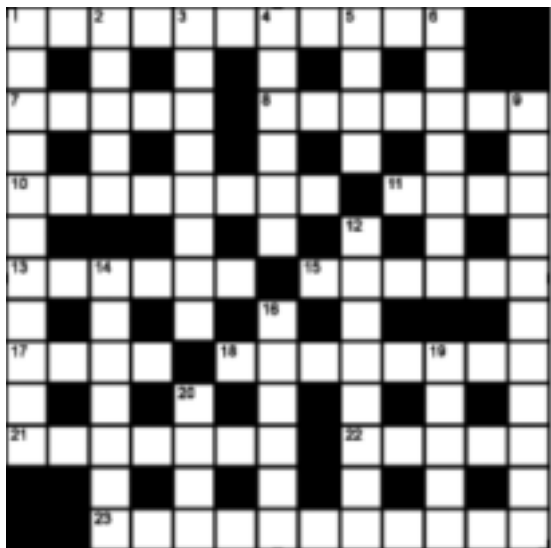


Alice Wheeldon: part of Derby's proud working class history



A prison warden, Hettie Wheeldon, Winnie Mason, and Alice Wheeldon in January 1917

Prize Crossword No. 86 set by Zebedee



Solution to prize crossword No 85 which appeared in the May 2013 edition of the ASLEF Journal

Congratulations to **Mark Benson** from **Loughton in Essex**

Across: 7 Ounce 8 Palette 9 Dewdrop 10 Tying 11 Perk 12 Fluoride 15 Absolute 16 Trek 19 Tamar 21 Theatre 22 Innings 23 Nitre. **Down:** 1 Hold up 2 Unawares 3 Genre 4 Glutton 5 Etui 6 Reggae 8 Papal States 13 Irritate 14 Glaring 15 Antrim 17 Keeper 18 Being 20 Menu.

Across

- 1 Bus-to-city-centre scheme (4,3,4)
 7 Examination bed (5)
 8 Swaggering courage (7)
 10 Wave up and down (8)
 11 Sound of geese; unhappy audience (4)
 13 Symbolic object (6)
 15 A fruitcake eaten at Easter or Christmas (6)
 17 Wharf (4)
 18 Imagines, theorises (8)
 21 A wearing away (7)
 22 Train of followers (5)

- 23 Undergo conversion (3,3,5)

Down

- 1 Vividly pretty (e.g. view) (11)
 2 Circular; delivery route (5)
 3 Sulky Trojan War hero (8)
 4 Formal discussion (6)
 5 Terrible czar (4)
 6 Dishonest avoidance (7)
 9 Becoming out of date (11)
 12 Getting rid of; right to

use (8)

14 Signal fires; Brecon has some (7)

16 Slake (thirst) (6)

19 Child's toy; be hanged (5)

20 Rub clean (4)



MARKS & SPENCER

The winner of this month's crossword will receive Marks & Spencer vouchers to the value of £25

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Thanks for all your responses to the 85th ASLEF crossword in the May edition. If you complete this month's crossword please send the solution to the Editor, ASLEF Journal, 77 St John Street, London EC1M 4NN by the 14th of the issue month.

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